

The Listening Post

Kentucky Talking Book Library Newsletter

**Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives
Kentucky Talking Book Library
300 Coffee Tree Road Frankfort, KY 40601
1-800-372-2968
Serving Kentucky's Need to Know**

Number 44

Summer 2006



Happy Birthday to Us!

March 3, 2006, marked the 75th anniversary of the Pratt-Smoot Act which created the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). Records indicate that library service for blind patrons began in the late nineteenth century. As early as 1868, the Boston Public Library established a department for the blind after receiving eight embossed volumes. In 1913 the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) in Louisville, Kentucky, started producing books in Braille.

In 1930, identical bills were introduced in Congress by Representative Ruth Pratt of New York and Senator Reed Smoot of Utah to provide library service for the blind on a national scale. The Pratt-Smoot Act, signed by President Herbert Hoover on March 3, 1931, established the program that would become the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS/BPH.)

1933 introduced vinyl records (the first “talking” books), in addition to Braille books. During to the Great Depression in 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order to provide record players to patrons who could not afford them. In 1952 the service was opened to children by the elimination of the word “adult” from the statute. Open reel magnetic tapes were added in 1960. The program further expanded in 1966 to provide talking books to individuals who are physically unable to hold books. Flexible discs replaced the heavier vinyl records and cassettes replaced open reel tapes in 1968. The

format of 4-sided cassettes was adopted in 1977 and is still in use today, with changes to a more up-to-date digital format on the horizon.

KTBL Goes Digital

Thanks to a grant from the Library Services and Technology Act, the Kentucky Talking Book Library has purchased a new digital recording system. KTBL has two recording booths in which we record talking books with a Kentucky connection. The new system is installed in one booth, replacing a 30-year-old system which used reel-to-reel tape. The other booth will be converted next year.



The system is a Low Complexity Digital Mastering system (LCM) and it will create recordings with improved sound and clarity. This is important since the majority of our patrons are senior citizens who may have hearing problems. It will also allow us to edit sound recordings as easily as a Word document. For example, we can delete a mistake and insert a correction without having to re-record large sections.

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) is currently developing a new digital talking book and player, and our system will be compatible with the NLS standard. Until the projected release of this new format in 2008 (and during a lengthy transition period), cassette talking books will remain the standard. Our system includes components which allow us to transfer digital recordings to cassette for distribution to our patrons. We can also transfer older reel or cassette tapes to a digital file for sound editing.

We have already begun work on 10-12 digital books. The Kentucky books we have recorded have been very popular with our readers. Both fiction and non-fiction are in high demand. Many Kentucky books are requested by Talking Book patrons in other states, and sent to them via Interlibrary Loan. Currently, the top 25 books most requested by our patrons consist of five NLS books and 20 Kentucky books.

While there are digital audio books already available to the general public, our recordings must be proprietary in order to comply with copyright laws and US Postal regulations. Only registered patrons have access to our collection of over 50,000 books—including nearly 1400 KY books recorded by volunteers in our studios.

2006 volunteer Recognition

KTBL currently has 24 active volunteers. To thank these volunteers for their countless hours of service, Paula, with Janet's help, organized an Appreciation Luncheon which was held on Friday, April 21. About half of the volunteers were able to attend and enjoy sandwiches, veggies and cake. The volunteers



Paula Ernspiker and volunteer, Russ Hatter check out new digital recording equipment.

received gift certificates to a local bookstore, donated by an anonymous friend of KTBL.

After enjoying their lunch and spending time getting to know other volunteers, Paula demonstrated the new digital recording equipment. She explained how the recording system works, then she and Larry showed how the books make it from computer to cassette tapes.

The volunteers were please to learn how much you enjoy the books they record. It really goes without saying, with over 50 books recorded each year, that the Kentucky collection would not be what it is today without our dedicated volunteers.

Descriptive Video Service Information

New Movies

Comments on the last survey indicated your interest in us expanding our DVS collection to include movies on the DVD format. In response to this, KTBL has recently added 2 DVD movies to our descriptive video collection. About half of our patrons who use the descriptive videos said they would like to try the new format. You must provide your own DVD player. Please let us know what you think of the DVD's and we will order more based on the response.



Stagecoach **Guns of Diablo**

We also added 25 new movies to our VHS descriptive video collection. These movies are:

DVS 00106 The Outlaw
DVS 00130 Life With Father
DVS 00107 Good News
DVS 00104 My Man Godfrey
DVS 00110 Nothing Sacred
DVS 00105 Royal Wedding
DVS 00109 Topper
DVS 00102 Girl With a Pearl Earring

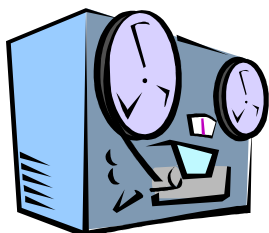
DVS 00108 Last of the Mohicans
DVS 00100 Snows of Kilimanjaro
DVS 00101 Angel and the Badman
DVS 00096 Made for Each Other
DVS 00097 Meet John Doe
DVS 00098 Of Human Bondage
DVS 00095 Penny Serenade
DVS 00099 A Star is Born

DVS 00093 DOA
DVS 00099 The House on Haunted Hill
DVS 00092 Lonesome Dove
DVS 00090 The 39 Steps
DVS 00091 The Strange Love of
Martha Ivers

DVS 00089 Little Lord Fauntleroy
DVS 00088 The Ransom of Red Chief
DVS 00114 Fighting Sullivans
DVS 00111 The Picture of Dorian Grey

New Video Mailing Boxes

In the very near future we will be sending your VHS videos in new mailing containers. The old boxes with the straps will be replaced with black plastic containers (similar to the containers from the movie rental shops.) The container will have a plastic sleeve on the outside with a return mail card that will be used the same way we do now. Simply turn the card over so our address shows, place it in the sleeve and drop it in the mail. If you experience problems with the new containers, please call KTBL.



Audio Studio for the Reading Impaired Celebrates 25 Years of Service

In 1968, Recording for the Blind (RFB), a national organization that produces audio textbooks for schools, had more business than it could handle at its Louisville location on Haldeman Avenue. Through the efforts of Ruth Drennan Carmichael, a woman active in the blind community, a satellite recording facility was set up in the Anchorage (KY) Presbyterian Church. Volunteer narrators and monitors helped RFB meet its needs for the next 13 years. As RFB no longer required the excess capacity, plans were made to close the Anchorage studio.

The volunteers and clients recognized the needs of blind and other reading impaired people for life-enriching reading materials and formed the non-profit Anchorage Studio for the Reading Impaired. The studio now has ninety-six volunteers who narrate and monitor the voice recording for some of our Kentucky books and all of our Kentucky magazines. In fact, long-time volunteer Hayden Heaphy recently began recording First Cats: Amazing Origins of the UK Sports Tradition, written by Louisvillian Tom Stephens who works for the Kentucky Historical Society. The book details the early years of University of Kentucky basketball. Hayden also leads a group of volunteers who repair cassette players for KTBL.

The studio's main function is to record materials for individuals for a fee. The Audio Studio is open Monday through Thursday. If you wish to use its services, call Ann Rich, Studio Director, at 1-502-245-5422.



Guide Dogs for the Visually Disabled

Do you know the difference between a guide dog and a Seeing Eye dog? Only dogs trained by The Seeing Eye, Inc. of Morristown, New Jersey are properly called Seeing Eye dogs. The generic term for dogs trained by other schools is “guide dog”. The use of such dogs began in Germany with blind WWI veterans. Dorothy Harrison Eustus, an American living in Switzerland, saw these dogs and wrote an article which appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in November, 1928. A Tennessee man named Morris Frank received the first dog trained by Ms. Eustus, and in exchange, he eventually established The Seeing Eye, the first guide dog school in America.

Did you know that the biggest problem for guide dog users is interference from the general public? Whenever a guide dog is in his harness, he is working as his owner’s eyes, and needs to pay full attention to his job. Distracting a guide dog could put his owner in danger and can cause a lapse in his training. Never touch, pet, or call a guide dog without permission from his owner. Many users do not mind answering polite questions from curious strangers, especially if they are children.

Those of you who are participating in our Summer Reading Program (and even those who aren’t) might want to read some of these books about guide dogs and their owners. Many of these titles, and others, are available in Braille, so call us if you prefer that format.

RC 39251 Mom’s Best Friend (grades 2-4)

RC 32373 Guide Dog Goes to School (grades 2-4)

RC 58712 Right Dog for the Job: Ira’s Path from Service Dog to Guide Dog (grades 2-4)

RC 31732 Maggie By My Side (grades 4-6)

RC 57627 Animal Helpers for the Disabled (grades 4-6)

RC 22731 Greff: the Story of a Guide Dog (grades 5-7)

RC 52424 Bringing Up Beauty (grades 5-7)

RC 34518 Triumph of the Seeing Eye (grades 5-7)

RC 60083 Love in the Lead: the Miracle of the Seeing Eye Dog

RC 11904 Emma & I

RC 22362 Emma and Co.

RC 20007 Tom & Bear: the Training of a Guide Dog Team

RC 33746 Leading Lady: Dinah’s Story

RC 19280 “Keep Your Head Up, Mr. Putnam!”

RC 58508 Partners in Independence: A Success Story of Dogs and the Disabled

Summer Reading Reminder

It's not too late to sign up for the summer reading program, *Paws, Claws, Scales and Tales*. The program highlights animals, both real and imaginary. All of the books named in the Guide Dog section will count toward a chance to win the grand prize at the end of the summer. Contact your local public library for a list of activities they have planned. Our program runs through August 15. Contact your librarian for more information.

Simon and Anne signed up
for the Summer Reading Program



Donations

Contributions to our program, whether large or small, make a difference to us. Donations recently allowed us to print a new DVS catalog. Thank you all for your generosity.

Billie Harmon
Anne Kirkpatrick
Richard L. Owens
Adeleine Martin
Florice Larimore

Nathan & Ruby Pierce
Mary C. Logan
Julie Worthington
Gifford S. Blyton
Mary Ann Boss

If you would like to contribute to KTBL, please make your check or money order payable to the Kentucky Talking Book Library, P O Box 537, Frankfort, KY 40602-0537. Please do not send cash through the mail. Donations are 100% tax deductible and appreciated by the patrons who use our service.

Dates to Remember

The Talking Book Library will be closed on the following days:

July 4: Independence Day
September 5: Labor Day
October 26: Staff Development Day



KTBL holds a staff meeting once a month for about an hour and a half. All calls are transferred to voice mail. If you call during that time, you will get a recorded greeting. Please leave a message and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

Important Items to Remember

Kentucky Talking Book Library

1-800-372-2968

1-502-564-8300 ext 276 (local)

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 am until 4:30 pm

You may leave a voice mail message after hours.

We want you to enjoy Talking Books. Your librarian can tailor your service to suit your needs, whatever they are. Please do not hesitate to call us for any of the following:

- **to make book requests**
- **with any questions or problems**
- **whenever your name, address, or telephone number changes**
- **to temporarily stop service**
- **if you want to change the types of books you get, or the number of books you receive**
- **when you have problems with books or machines**
- **if you want to change the format of your newsletters or catalogs**
- **to cancel your service**

Include your name, address, and telephone number on all correspondence, request lists, e-mails, and telephone messages.

Please return each book as soon as you finish it. The maximum loan period is 30 days.

Kentucky magazines and the cassette version of The Listening Post must be returned to KTBL within 30 days. Keeping the magazine or newsletter longer may prevent you from receiving future issues.

Remember to rewind tapes before returning them.

Mark an "X" on the mailcard of any defective book.

Take care of all cassette books, Braille books, and cassette players; keep them free of food, liquids, dust, and debris.

Please keep this list for future reference.



In providing information to readers of THE LISTENING POST, the Kentucky Talking Book Library does not endorse any product or service referred to in this newsletter.

THE LISTENING POST

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FREE MATTER FOR
THE BLIND AND
PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED



THE LISTENING POST is also available on cassette or in Braille. If you prefer the cassette or Braille version, please call 1-800-372-2968.